

MIGRATION AND REFUGEE CHALLENGES FOR SOUTHERN AND SOUTHEAST MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LEBANON, JORDAN AND EGYPT

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The variance in replies for Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt most certainly reflects the difference in volumes of migrants and refugees that each of the three countries hosts.

The Survey rightfully addressed in its third block specific challenges of Southern and Southeast Mediterranean countries that are often not properly or adequately addressed in the European public debate on the migration and refugee situation in these countries and in particular in Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon, on which this article will primarily focus. The answers to questions 20 and 21¹ allow for a number of useful comparisons between these three countries that reveal similarities but also clear differences. Analysing the results according to the geographical origin of respondents also yields interesting results. The perception of respondents as shown in the results of this Survey will be analysed against the background of available factual information.

Differences in Answers According to Priority Issues

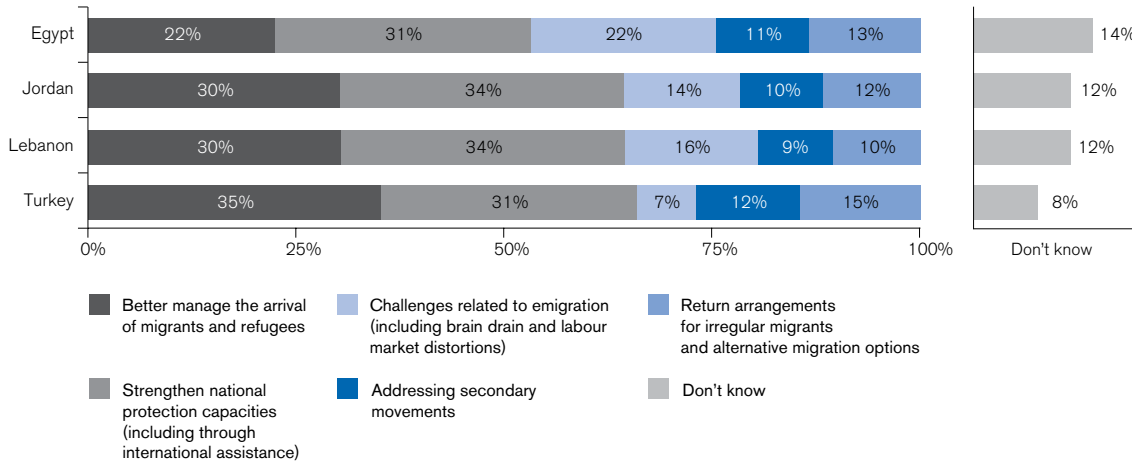
Under Q20, respondents were asked to select two priorities that governments should follow when dealing with human movements and migrations (see Graph 1). To better manage the arrival of migrants and refugees is one of the most recurrent priorities identified by the respondents. Lebanon and Jordan show similar patterns with 30% of all survey respondents indicating that this constituted a priority. This percentage is only exceeded in the case of Turkey with 35% of respondents considering this issue to be a priority. 22% of respondents consider this to be a priority for Egypt. Thus, it appears that the variance in replies for these three countries reflects the difference in volumes of migrants and refugees that each of these countries hosts.

To the variance in volumes should be added the differences in administrative capacities of countries.

Turkey hosts about 2.7 million Syrian refugees. In 2016, the UNHCR registered 1.1 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon and 660,000 in Jordan. In Egypt, they only amounted to 117,168 (UNHCR, 2016). To the variance in volumes should be added the differences in administrative capacities of countries. With a population of over 90 million, Egypt is certainly in a better administrative position to handle the refugees it hosts than Lebanon and Jordan with populations of 4.5 and 8 million, respectively.

1. Q20 on the main priority issues of governments – Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt – when dealing with human movements and migrations and Q21 on to what extent some specific element (see Graph 1) should be enhanced in order to better manage the arrival of migrants and refugees.

Graph 1: What should be the main priority issues of the following governments when dealing with human movements and migrations?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 20

However, the most recurrent of all priorities identified in Q20 by the respondents is strengthening national protection capacities, including through international assistance, with 34% for Lebanon and Jordan and 31% for Egypt. Protection is not confined to *non-refoulement* and to admission in the host country's territory of refugees fleeing persecution or generalised violence. Providing for the livelihood needs of the refugees, in terms of shelter, food, education and healthcare, is also an important dimension of protection. To reach European destinations, refugees may expose themselves to danger by resorting to smuggling rings and crossing the sea in unsafe conditions (Rollins, 2014). Providing for livelihoods is therefore protecting refugees against such threats to their lives. Some vulnerable categories of refugees can also be exposed to threats for their safety and integrity. Early marriage, child labour and prostitution are among such threats (UN Women, 2013). The highest priority for protection is therefore justified for several reasons. First, Lebanon and Jordan are not parties to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. Egypt is but with reservations on the rights to education and healthcare. This legal situation raises some concerns regarding the capacity of these countries to meet the needs of refugees. Second, underdevelopment problems in the three countries, where infrastructures are sometimes lacking, unemployment and underemployment are widespread and poverty is rampant leaves them with few resources to meet the rights of their respective nationals, let alone those of refugees. Therefore, the formulation of the question with the addition of "including through international assistance" is perfectly legitimate. In the economic and social circumstances of host states in Southern and Southeast Mediterranean countries described above, international assistance is critical.

Interestingly, challenges related to emigration (including brain drain and labour market distortions) is the third priority issue for the three countries. The formulation of the issue does not allow us to determine precisely whether the concern of the respondents relates to emigration in general, or brain drain and labour market distortions more specifically. In any case, the analysis of the results regarding Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan reveals an inverse order in comparison with the previous paragraph, with 30% of the respondents mentioning emigration as a key priority for Egyptian authorities when it comes to migration, as opposed to only 16% in Lebanon and 14% in Jordan. Egypt is the largest Arab country of origin of migrant workers, with the main external labour markets situated in the region. Respondents, and in particular Egyptian respondents, may have been thinking of all migrant workers in replying to the question, not just of those having migrated to the EU. Egyptian migrants are estimated at 6 million, equivalent to some 22% of the labour force. Egyptian migrant workers to the EU account for some 25% of its total migration (Zohry, 2015). Italy and Greece are their main

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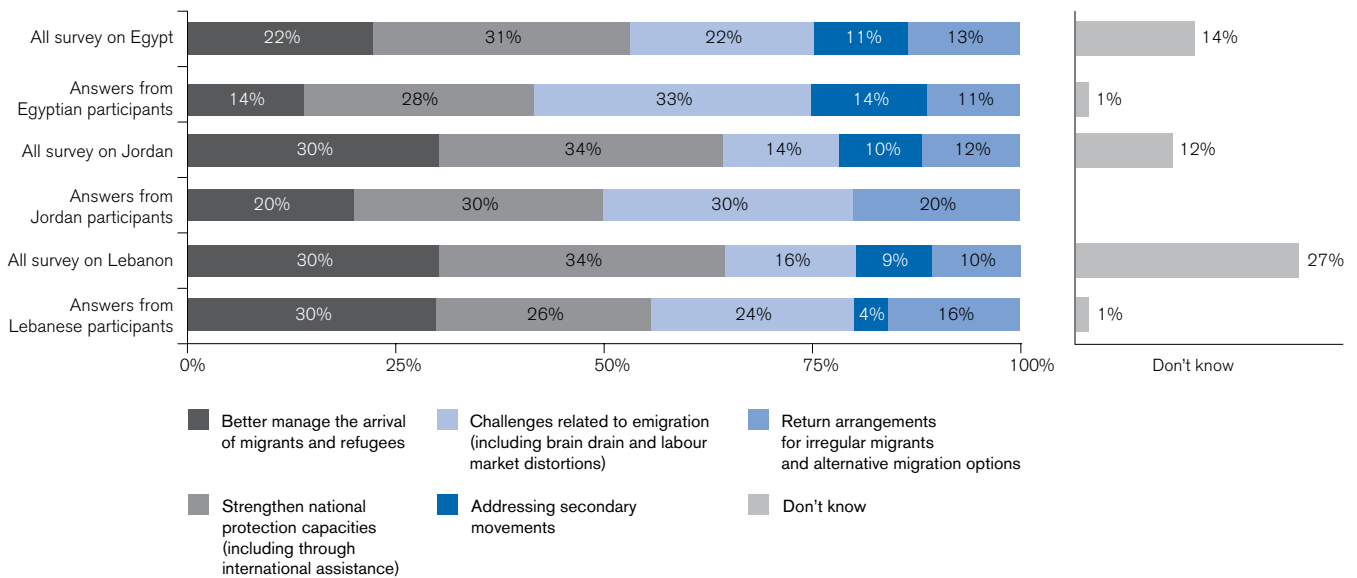
In the economic and social circumstances of host states in Southern and Southeast Mediterranean countries, international assistance is critical.

destinations. A good part is in irregular situation and employed in the large informal economies of the two southern European countries (De Bel-Air, 2016). Irregular migration situations and informal employment call for protection policy measures. As for Jordanian migration to Europe, it is minimal and the Lebanese emigrant community is mainly made up of highly-skilled migrants, for whom emigration challenges are relatively few.

Differences in Answers According to Origin of Respondents

The analysis of the answers according to the geographical origin of the respondents leads to interesting results (see Graph 2).

Graph 2: What should be the main priority issues of the following governments when dealing with human movements and migrations?
(Please choose two options)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 20

Egyptian, Jordanian and Lebanese respondents all identified the challenges related to emigration for their respective countries to a greater extent than other respondents.

Egyptian, Jordanian and Lebanese respondents all identified the challenges related to emigration for their respective countries to a greater extent than other respondents. The graph shows that this issue was considered as a priority for Lebanon by 16% of all respondents and 24% of Lebanese participants, for Jordan by 14% of all respondents and 30% of Jordanian participants and for Egypt by 22% of all respondents and 33% of Egyptian participants. In other words, the differences are to the magnitude of 50% in the cases of Lebanon and Egypt and 114% for Jordan. These national concerns about emigration should be taken into account in migration policies of the said countries and not hidden as a shameful issue.

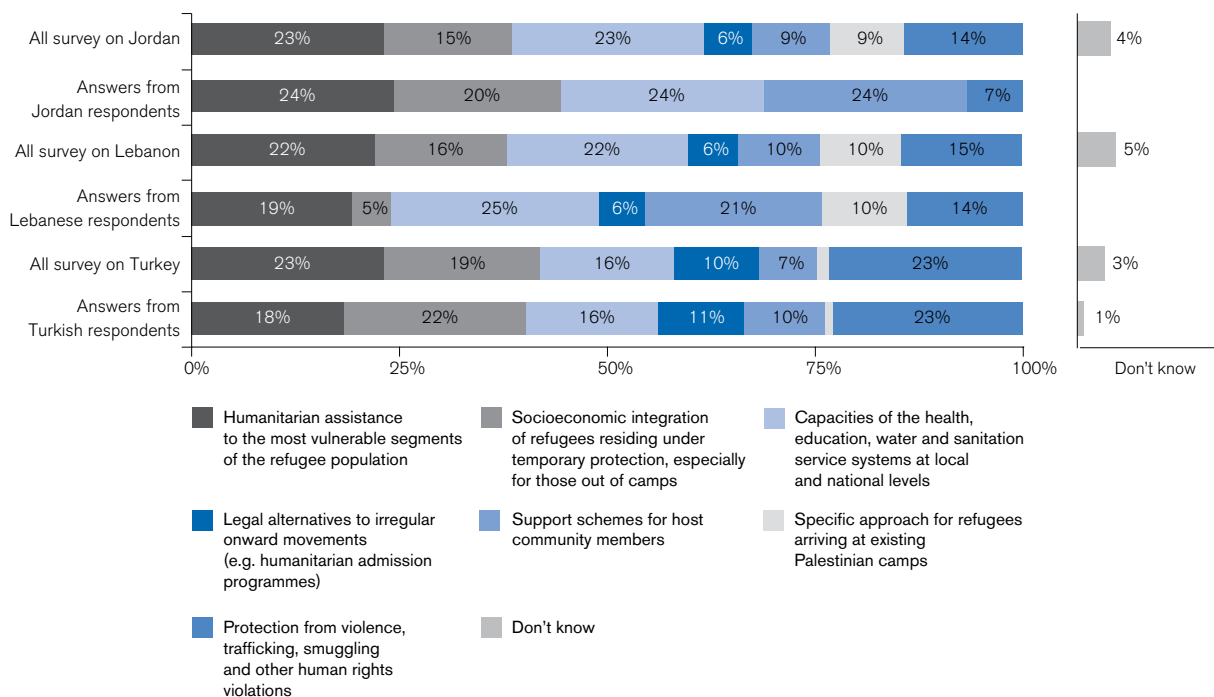
For each of the three countries, the higher priority accorded to emigration by national participants is at the expense of all other issues except one. Even better managing the arrival of migrants and refugees and strengthening national protection capacities loses ground in the answers of national participants in comparison with all respondents. For Egypt, the exception is addressing secondary movements, which may be explained by the fact that Egypt is a transit country. Migrants and refugees, mainly from Sudan, South Sudan and the Horn of Africa, travel to Egypt with the objective of proceeding further to, or of being resettled in, industrialised countries. Often this secondary migration does not happen, with refugees and migrants remaining in Egypt. The intention of secondary migration, even if it does not materialise, is therefore important for Egypt and for Egyptian participants in the Survey.

Better Hosting of Migrants and Refugees

While Q20 incorporated all Southern and Southeast Mediterranean countries, Q21 was crafted to understand specifically how to better manage the arrival of migrants and refugees in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. An analysis of answers for Lebanon and Jordan by all respondents and by participants from the two countries again reveals both similarities and differences (see Graph 3). Enhancing humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable segments of the refugee populations is identified as a top priority and almost to the same extent by all respondents and by national participants for the two countries.

Graph 3: To what extent should the following elements be enhanced in order to better manage the arrival of migrants and refugees in the following countries?

(Please choose three options for each country)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 7th Euromed Survey/Question 21

But when it comes to the socioeconomic integration of refugees residing under temporary protection, especially for those out of camps, a difference between Jordan and Lebanon comes to the fore. 15% and 16% of all respondents consider that the socioeconomic integration of refugees should be enhanced in Jordan and Lebanon respectively. In turn, Jordanian respondents go further, since 20% of them deem the enhancement of integration a priority. This contrasts with Lebanese participants. Only 5% of them considered that the socioeconomic integration of refugees should be enhanced. This difference may originate partly in the fragmented political system and fragile demographic balance between communities in Lebanon (Awad, 2014) that further socioeconomic integration of refugees could jeopardise.

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Enhancing the health, education and sanitation service systems at local and national levels is a very slightly higher priority for Jordanian and Lebanese participants than for all respondents. But it is particularly worth observing that for Jordanian and Lebanese respondents commenting on their own countries, support schemes to host community members is a much stronger preoccupation than the Survey average, which gives further evidence of the perception gap between the local respondents and other respondents regarding the importance of the challenges in Southern Mediterranean host countries. For Lebanon, this is a priority for 10%

Responses on support schemes to host community members gives evidence of the perception gap between the local respondents (Jordan and Lebanon) and other respondents (Survey average) regarding the importance of the challenges in Southern Mediterranean host countries.

of all respondents and for 21% of Lebanese participants. For Jordan, the difference is even greater: it is a priority for 9% of all respondents and for 24% of Jordanian participants (see Graph 3).

The challenge of societal integration and differences between Jordan and Lebanon transpire from answers on a specific approach for refugees arriving at existing Palestinian camps. Whereas for Lebanon 10% of all respondents and of Lebanese participants equally consider it a priority, for Jordan the corresponding percentages are 9% and 0%, which could partly reflect the obstacles to the entry in Jordan of Palestinians from Syria (Fritzsche, 2014).

Conclusions

The results of Q20 and Q21 are particularly insightful and could be taken into account by policy makers from both Southern Mediterranean and European countries.

Answers from the respondents originating from Southern Mediterranean countries regarding the challenges in their own countries are particularly useful as they balance a public debate where the concerns and priorities of host countries have too often been underestimated. Effectiveness of policies requires that the interests of all concerned parties are addressed. Refugees and migrants will be the main beneficiaries of such effectiveness.

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